

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2642

December 24, 1993

1994 FOOD PRICES -- The Consumer Price Index for all food in 1994 is expected to rise 2 to 4 percent above 1993 levels. Costs of processing and distributing foods will rise modestly and may not totally be passed on to consumers considering the relative weakness of consumer demand. Restaurant prices are expected to increase 2 to 4 percent. Competition among fast food outlets will continue to keep price increases moderate. The farm value of food, the cost of farm commodities used in finished food products, totalled just under 30 percent of retail food costs in 1993. It will have little additional impact on 1994 prices except the few areas of tight supply. **Contact: Ralph Parlett (202) 219-0870.**

COTTON ARP -- The final acreage reduction program (ARP) requirement for 1994 upland cotton will be announced by January 1 and based on USDA December supply and use estimates. A preliminary reduction of 17.5 percent has been announced. Enrollment is expected to decline from this season due to the anticipated higher ARP. If yields maintain trend levels next season, upland production could total between 16 and 17 million bales as compared to an expected 16.3 million this season. **Contact: Bob Skinner (202) 720-5505.**

RIPPLE EFFECT -- Many countries are adjusting to tight U.S. corn supplies and higher prices by buying alternative grains from other countries. Korea is expected to buy more feed wheat and less corn, while Japan is purchasing more sorghum, largely from the Sudan, and less corn. Prospective global trade in barley is up because the EC, Canada and Australia have large exportable supplies. **Peter Riley (202) 219-0824.**

MILK OUTLOOK -- Lower but stable milk prices are forecast for 1994. Larger production and unchanged commercial use of skim milk solids are expected, generating sizable surpluses of milkfat and milk solids during the year. **Contact: Sara Short (202) 219-0768**

U.S. MEAT PRODUCTION -- U.S. total meat production is forecast to increase around 3 percent in 1994. Per capita consumption of beef is expected to increase to 67 pounds, pork will decrease slightly to 51 pounds, broilers will gain nearly 3 pounds to 71 pounds and turkey consumption will remain about the same at an average 18 pounds per person. **Contact: Tom Kurtz (202) 720-3106.**

CUTTING HOLIDAY FAT -- The first human study of Oatrim, a fat substitute invented by George Inglett, a scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, shows that it lowered cholesterol levels, improved glucose tolerance which raises the body's ability to process sugar from a meal, and helped the volunteers lose weight. Before the USDA tests were conducted most of the volunteers had elevated insulin levels, which means they were less efficient at metabolizing dietary sugar and at greater risk of developing diabetes. Oatrim reduced the volunteers' insulin levels up to 24 percent. Oatrim doesn't decrease the baked volume of products and it maintains comparable appearance, taste and texture. Products containing Oatrim are now on grocery shelves. **Contact: Judith Hallfrisch (301) 504-8396.**

WHEAT TRADE -- Brazil's wheat crop is expected to be the worst in over a decade, yet domestic consumption is forecast to grow 3 to 5 percent. The import forecast for Brazil is 5.5 million tons. Due to the price band mechanism for feed grains in Central America, poultry and livestock producers in the region are choosing to purchase imported feed quality wheat rather than corn or sorghum. The price band system causes steeply higher prices for feed grains relative to feed wheat, such as a 20 percent tariff for corn compared to a one percent tariff for wheat. The combined import forecast for Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador is up 50,000 tons. **Contact: Sara Schwartz (202) 219-0824.**

FARM HOUSEHOLD INCOME -- Farming is no longer the dominant source of income for most farm operator households. Three-quarters of U.S. farms are very small businesses having less than \$50,000 in gross sales. Farm operator household income from all sources averaged \$40,000 last year, about the same as the average for all U.S. households, \$39,000. Farm income was only \$4,337 or about 11 percent of household income. Most off-farm income comes from wages and salaries or from a non-farm business. The larger the farm, the less likely the farm operator is to have a major occupation off the farm. Economic development in rural areas is probably most important to non-commercial farm households to improve their off-farm earnings. **Contact: Janet Perry (202) 219-0807.**

FARM ECONOMY -- The farm sector entering 1994 is more cost-efficient, better capitalized and positioned for improved potential profitability. The farm economy will experience only a moderate rate of growth, despite a relatively high level of net cash income. Both assets and debt are expected to increase at annual rates of 2 to 3 percent throughout the remainder of the '90s. How big is farming? Try \$878 billion, the value of farm business assets at the end of 1993. However, the real value of farm assets is at virtually the same level as in 1962. During this 32-year period the inflation-adjusted level of farm debt has increased almost 15 percent. Farm business assets are projected to rise \$16 billion during 1993, less than 2 percent, while the general rate of inflation is expected to exceed the growth rate in asset values giving an overall decline in 1993 and 1994 in the real value of farm assets. **Contact: James Ryan (202) 219-0798.**

LEASING LAND -- Recent statistics reveal that nearly half of all agricultural land is leased to others. One and a half million landowners lease out 332 million acres. In 1900 leased agricultural land totalled 30 percent, in 1988 it had increased to 45 percent. Leasing is viewed by farmers as an effective way to gain control of land resources, enhancing management flexibility and reducing risk. Forty-one percent of all farmers operate at least some leased land. Women are the largest group of agricultural landlords, controlling 40 percent of the land in the rental market. The percentage is expected to rise as the farm population ages. **Contact: Ann Vandeman (202) 219-0434.**

KIDNEY STONES -- Drinking citrus juices and drinking plenty of fluids are important ways to decrease kidney stone formation. More than one million cases of kidney stones are diagnosed each year. The stones are hard masses of salts and minerals that have formed in the kidney. They can be extremely painful as they break away and move down the urinary tract. Researchers have found that a high-salt diet of 14 grams of sodium a day causes changes leading to stone formation. No more than 3,000 milligrams of sodium a day are recommended. The study also showed that the citrate in citrus juice, such as in cranberry, grapefruit or orange juice, helps prevent stones from forming. Water helps to keep urine diluted. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-3329.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1907 -- Some experts believe that the key to getting Americans to eat healthier is to start them off that way with healthier school meals. **Maria Bynum** reports on the latest moves to improve school meals. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1389 -- New uses for that old Christmas tree; improving school meals; healthy lunches for healthy kids; a new kind of gasoline; the right bird feed. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1899 -- 1994 acreage reduction program for rice; a flood of help for flooded farmers; China welcomes U.S. apples; farm bill debate preview; finding wheat that is resistant to aphids. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1652 -- Computerized O.J.; spice tracing; methanol results; sweet research; bacterial bounty. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, December 29, hog and pig inventory; Thursday, December 30, ag prices, world tobacco situation; Monday, January 3, horticultural product exports; Tuesday, January 4, crop & weather update.

Few USDA reports are scheduled in January. The Newsline will continue to offer new stories Monday through Friday and cover developing events.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Patrick O'Leary** reports on USDA efforts to exchange germplasm with the former Soviet Republics; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on the new "Charleston Hot" pepper developed by USDA researchers in South Carolina; **Will Pemble** reports on USDA research on a new shock treatment for plants that improves the transfer of useful genes.

ACTUALITIES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on safe slow cooking, and on sheep farming as a small scale agriculture alternative; **Patrick O'Leary** reports on a USDA program to reclaim abandoned mines in West Virginia and other states. (All originally transmitted in 1993).

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Patrick O'Leary** reports on USDA research about the way the body uses vitamin A; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on USDA Forest Service wood products research; **DeBoria Janifer** reports on health care reform and rural America.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite **Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays** from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, **Saturdays** from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and **Mondays** from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

OFFMIKE

WE'RE THE GARDEN SPOT OF THE NATION...says **Jim Riggs** (WILO/WSHW, Frankfort, IN). Growing and harvest conditions were ideal this year, producing record soybean yields and near record corn yields. Jim says station ag sales are up and a push is on to boost them again next year.

UPBEAT ATTITUDES...were noticed by **Russ Damhoff** (KLNT/KCLN, Clinton, IA) during coverage from their broadcast booth at the Quad Cities Farm Show. Russ and **Bart Bartholomew** plan to cover the Rock Island Expo, January 15-17. Russ says they've made major efforts during December to attract new business in 1994.

NO MOISTURE SINCE SEPTEMBER...says **Gary Wulf** (KZEN, Central City, NE), helping the harvest go fast because there wasn't much to take to town. Gary says premium quality alfalfa in his area is bringing \$125/ton, a record. Cattle producers are doing well, and farm equipment dealers had a good year.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



Office of Communications
Electronic Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1340

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300

RETIRED...**Dean Thurow** (KCJB, Minot, ND), completing 52 years in broadcasting. His first day on the air was Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941. He has served KCJB since 1955. **John Vigested** is producing farm programming at the station. John notes that there is a shortage of grain cars in the region. Elevators fill them as soon as the cars are available.

1993 WAS A GOOD YEAR...personally, says **Doug Cooper** (WOI, Ames, IA). He and wife Dianne adopted a baby girl, Inger. Doug says a major forage problem exists in his area. To help inform listeners he produced several programs and satellite feeds on the quality and energy available in the feed. He suggests producers get their forage tested to determine how much corn or other supplements to add. Doug says the Iowa Farm Land Value Survey will be released January 16.

MAY 1994...be even better than '93, and your best year yet.


VIC POWELL
Office of Communications